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Lil'wat Lands

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EVENTS LISTING
FOR ACTIVISTS



Caterpillar workers took matters into their own hands in Brampton, Ontario on April 24 to 29, 1991

Bridge Blasted on Lil'wat Land

On April 17th unknown individuals blasted a logging bridge with dynamite in British Columbia. The blast, which destroyed 15 metres of decking on the Green River bridge, halted work on a road which is being built by Howe Sound Timber.

Company officials who claimed that they had been planning to replace the bridge, quickly repaired it but three days later it caught fire causing even more damage. The road is to go through sacred Native burial grounds of the Lil'wat Nation who have been struggling against attempts by logging

companies to cut down forests on their land and have also been fighting, like many other First Nations across Canada, for sovereignty. When the first shots rang out at Oka, the Lil'wat responded by putting up their own barricades not only in solidarity with the Mohawks but in defense of their own lands. Since then many have been arrested and been brought to trial in Canadian courts.

The Lil'wat have responded by declaring themselves prisoners of war and have refused to recognize any
(continued on pg. 2)

'MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SKIN A CAT'

More than 250 workers at the Caterpillar Plant in Brampton, Ontario took matters into their own hands when the company announced that despite profitable operations it will close down, leaving 400 workers jobless.

On the evening of April 24 the workers, many of whom had been employed at the plant for 20 years or more, decided that their situation was desperate enough to take direct action. Locking themselves inside the plant, they declared they wouldn't budge until the company either scrapped its plans to relocate the plant in North Carolina, or at least negotiated a reasonable severance package to compensate the workers for their job loss.

(See "Caterpillar Workers Take Direct Action" on pg. 2)

Caterpillar Workers Take Direct Action

— continued from page 1 —

The workers occupied the plant for 5 days, capturing the imagination of thousands of workers being victimized by closures resulting from the Free Trade Agreement. Hundreds of supporters came out to the Brampton site to show support, musicians played for the workers behind the gates, and representatives of the El Salvadorean Union FENASTRAS expressed solidarity and unity of purpose in defeating the Free Trade Agreement (FTA). It was generally understood that the Caterpillar workers' action was a show of "fuerza" and determination to all corporations who jump ship under the mantle of the FTA. Perhaps a glimpse of the growing workers' militancy that will develop in the face of a declining economy and an entrenched corporate agenda.

It was predicted that non-resolution of the Caterpillar occupiers' grievances could start a brushfire of similar occupations and workplace direct actions across the country, gathering fuel from people's anger about government inaction and union ineffectiveness in stopping closures (such as that at Elliot Lake), and the growing devastation wrought by the recession.

The Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) at the national as well as the local levels, came out in support of the workers. In a Labour Ministry initiated meeting on April 29, CAW took up a representative position in negotiations with the company on the workers' behalf.

For their part, Caterpillar attempted to have the occupation declared an illegal strike and eschew meetings with the CAW representatives. But five days later on April 29 the union decided that

the company's concession to meet at a bargaining table to negotiate a reasonable severance package was sufficient compromise for the worker's efforts. No settlement has yet been reached but negotiations continue.

As the Caterpillar workers have said "There's more than one way to skin a cat." In the U.S., workers organized within the traditional unions are challenging the old guard leadership and moving towards democratization: returning decision-making power to the workers at shop-floor level. In Mexico, a democratic union movement, independent of the PRI Government controlled labour arbiters is developing and quickly gaining momentum. Perhaps Canadian workers will continue to take matters into their own hands, taking direct action to demand some level of accountability from employers, or more hopefully to prevent the mass exodus to exploit Southern African-American and Mexican labour for maximum profit.

One way we can make such direct action not only possible but effective is to build mechanisms of community support for prolonged strike or occupation action, so that strikers and their families don't suffer consequences for handling the industrial front, but also to wage a struggle against the corporate agenda on the community front, adding fuel to the fire through boycott action and the like.

The Caterpillar workers took a strong and autonomous stand, capturing both the imagination and growing sentiment of workers across Canada. They are an inspiration. (For more information, we suggest the

Midwest Centre for Labour Research published "Early Warning Manual Against Plant Closings"—USD\$15.00 plus \$1.50 postage and handling. MCLR also offers Early Warning workshops, worker buyout feasibility studies on a consultancy basis, social impact statements and business retention studies. Midwest Centre for Labour Research, 3411 West Diversey #10, Chicago, Illinois 60647 USA)

Lil'wat

— continued from page 1 —

jurisdiction over them by the Canadian government. In a recent trial over 50 Lil'wat were found guilty of charges arising out of blockades that had taken place in recent months. Almost all were given two-month suspended sentences and none of the Lil'wat are currently imprisoned.

Though no one knows who was responsible for the explosion on the bridge, one thing that is certain is that it was a great boost to the Lil'wat struggle. There's no doubt that as many First Nations across Canada continue their fight for sovereignty and self-determination that acts like these will only increase.

Anarchist Hotline

For information on upcoming events of interest to the anarchist or activist community, or if you know of an event the community should know about, call the anarchist hotline, 535-5731.

MOVE Members Still Defiant Six Years After Bombing

Six years after the city of Philadelphia dropped a bomb on the MOVE organization's house, the city is continuing a long and brutal history of persecution by police and public officials.

On May 13, 1985 Mayor Wilson Goode ordered a massive assault on the radical utopian organization which included firing thousands of rounds of ammunition into their house, burning down most of the surrounding neighbourhood and killing five MOVE children. Ramona Africa, the only adult survivor of that assault, is currently imprisoned along with thirteen other MOVE members, nine of whom are serving time for the killing of police officer James Ramp, a killing the government has never conclusively pinned on any of them.

Carlos Africa, one of the prisoners, was reviewed for parole this January. At the interview he was told he was being paroled. However when the papers arrived they included the stipulation that Carlos "must not associate with MOVE members for any reason". This is the same stipulation which keeps Ramona Africa in prison still, based on MOVE members unwillingness to give up their beliefs for parole. Carlos refused the stipulation, and, in a further interview with the Parole Board, was denied parole. All MOVE members who have been offered this deal have refused and have been kept for their full sentences, because they see the stipulation as a direct violation of their rights to freedom of religion and association.

Six years on and the system has yet to break the MOVE family.

Ramona Africa will be joining us via phone from the women's prison in Muncy, PA, on Uppercut, one of Ecomedia's radio news shows, on CIUT 89.5 FM at 12:30 on Tuesday May 14. Tune in to hear the whole story of MOVE and their struggle inside the belly of the beast.



Lubicons Face Prison for Defending Their Land

Preliminary hearings for Lubicon Nation members have been delayed while Lubicon Lake Nation lawyers raise procedural points regarding the conduct of an RCMP investigation into the destruction of logging equipment on Lubicon territory. The first of thirteen Lubicon Lake Nation members were to appear in court in Peace River, Alberta on Monday April 29, charged with Possession of Explosives, Arson, Disguise with Intent, and Mischief. They each face up to 50 years in prison.

The charges stem from the destruction of logging equipment operating in Lubicon Nation territory last December 13. Daishowa, a Japanese multinational which is operating a pulp mill in the area, contracted the logging of sovereign Lubicon lands to Brewster Construction, a wholly-owned Daishowa subsidiary, and Buchanan Lumber. Last November 8, the Lubicon

Lake Indian Nation gave notice that all developments in unceded Lubicon territory would have to obtain operating permits from the Nation and comply with Lubicon environmental and wildlife protection regulations. Companies which failed to do so would be subject to removal without further notice. To date, Buchanan, Brewster, and numerous oil companies have failed to comply.

The Friends of the Lubicon (Toronto) has condemned "the use of the Canadian judicial system as a weapon against the Lubicon lands and people," demanding that all the charges be dropped against Lubicon Nation members on the basis that Canadian courts and police have no current jurisdiction on unceded Lubicon territories and on the basis that Buchanan Lumber is operating illegally without Lubicon Nation permits within unceded Lubicon territory.

Spirit of Bobby Sands' Struggle Continues

May fifth marked the tenth anniversary of Bobby Sands death and the birth of a renewed struggle by working class people of Northern Ireland.

This renewed struggle began when 300 men and women prisoners protested the removal of political status from republican prisoners of war in Northern Ireland, by refusing to wear clothes or clean their cells. It was followed by a high profile hunger strike initiated by Bobby Sands. The strike claimed him as its first victim on May 5th, 1981, but not before he was elected as a member of parliament and had become a powerful symbol through out Ireland of the struggle against the brutally repressive, quasi-fascist regime of the North.

On the day of his death there was mass rioting in Belfast while a sense of grave injustice swept through out the land. As a kid living in a small town in the Republic I can remember the black flags of commemoration hanging from lampposts and houses where nothing had hung before.

The nine more deaths claimed by the hunger strike brought on more riots as the Catholic working class of the North rose up in defiance of the state and a new generation of struggle began. The state responded with a 'shoot to kill' policy and dozens of premeditated assassinations followed as the republicans were denounced as "an Irish mafia" and censorship went into effect.

The isolation campaign has been considerably offset by the emergence of Sinn Fein (a political party which overtly supports the I.R.A.) as a force of political will of both the North and

South. Sinn Fein made the *highly controversial* decision to enter electoral politics (after decades of abstention) in response to the lead taken by Bobby Sands and two other hunger strikers who were elected to parliament.

The most recent effort to counter the growing acceptance of republican politics is a new round of so-called 'peace talks' taking place over the next few months. The talks include the British government, the Irish government (one of the most backward in Europe), ultra-right loyalist groups and the predominantly Catholic, middle class, middle of the road bastards otherwise known as the Social Democratic Labour Party (S.D.L.P.). Sinn Fein have been eliminated from the talks for the said reason that they will not denounce armed struggle, something the British have not been asked to do of their own armed campaign. Their elimination is a clear indication that the talks are yet another of the many in the past twenty years which have attempted to promote the illusion of progress, while their chances of resolving the conflict are nil.

Unfortunately the real goals of the talks are attainable. Those goals being the isolation of the republican movement by making it out as unwilling to talk, the legitimization of the S.D.L.P. and increased collaboration from the Irish government, all under the guise of a British initiative for peace. But political games such as these will never quell the spirit which will one day free Ireland and its working class.

Calendar

Saturday May 11; For a World Without Armies - ACT for Disarmament's ninth annual protest for peace at Queen's Park, 1pm. For more info or to volunteer call 531-6154.

Sunday May 12; Queer Nation Photo Party at 77 Mowat (just west of Dufferin and south of King) RSVP to Richard, 921-7658.

Monday May 13; Gynergy Wimmin's Coffee House at the 519 Church St. Community Centre (Wellesley TTC) Wheel chair accessible. 8pm, Free.

Wednesday May 15; ANVA presents Bobby Seale (co-founder of the Black Panthers) and Ellen Gabriel (Mohawk negotiator during the Oka crisis). A fundraiser for the campaign to shut down the ARMX91 weapons bazaar. \$12/\$10 advance, 7:30 pm 310 Danforth (Chester TTC)

Nations in Harmony. CASNP benefit concert at Humber College, 3199 Lakeshore Blvd. W. Featuring exciting acts too numerous to mention. \$12. More info at 363-4272.

Ecomedia Toronto

Ecomedia is an international "wire service" that acts as an alternative to regular news services. We focus on news and often censored information on autonomous and anarchist resistance and analysis of current events.

Ecomedia Toronto is a local office involved in three main projects: a radio show every Wednesday on CKLN 88.1 FM between 7 and 8 pm on the "Word of Mouth" program; also another radio spot, *Upper-cut*, at 12:15 pm Fridays on CIUT 89.5 FM; and the bulletin in your hands, published bi-weekly and free at locations around the city. Subscriptions are \$18/yr (26 issues) mailed monthly to cut costs. Order from the address on the front. Make cheques or M.O.'s payable to Ecomedia.